GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5654
ANSWERED ON:30.08.2001
USE OF BIOTECHNOLOGIES TO PROMOTE AGRICULTURE
MAHBOOB ZAHEDI

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have a plan to use biotechnologies to promote evolving plants which consume less water, drought resistant, pest resistant, contain nutrition, higher yields giving and environmentally safe;

(b) whether applications of such technologies have not yet been realized through genetic engineering;

(c) whether claims to pest resistance as in Bt. Cotton currently undergoing field trails pose inconsistent; and

(d) if so, Bt. Crops are a guarantee for creating super-pests and threatening friendly species due to production of toxins by the plants?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The data on trials of Bt. cotton were insufficient to assess the consistency of performance. Therefore, the trials are being repeated under the supervision of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) under multi-location Advanced Varietal Trials of the All India Coordinated Cotton Improvement Project.

(d) So far there is no conclusive and final evidence to suggest that Bt. crops will create super-pests and threaten friendly species due to production of toxins by plants.